

# Quick Reference Guide

## Behavior Contracts with Goal Setting (Emotional & Behavioral Difficulties)

**Search Terms:** behavior contracts, behavioral feedback, contingency contracts, class performance, decrease high frequency behavior, feedback, goal setting, increase low frequency behavior, motivation, negotiation skills, on-task behavior, performance feedback, performance over time, positive reinforcement, Premack Principal, reward contingency, rule governed behavior, self-management

**What is a Behavior Contract?** Behavior (or Contingency) contracting involves a document between learner and support staff that aims to increase low frequency behavior (e.g. on task) and decrease high frequency behavior (e.g. aggression) of learners with emotional and behavioral difficulties (Ruth, 1996; Selfridge, 2014).

**What is Goal Setting?** Goal setting is an individualized behavior technique utilized to increase task effort and performance through assignment of goals towards for a particular person (Ruth, 1996).

Why?	When/Where?	Who?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Why both? Research findings suggest that Behavior Contracting combined with goal setting are able to keep individuals on task and motivated more than behavior contracting or goal setting alone (Ruth, 1996).</li> <li>-Treatment Package: Contingency contracts can yield positive results because they actually package together several effective behavior management components, including rule-governed behavior and positive consequences with the provision of explicit behavioral feedback (Selfridge, 2004).</li> <li>- Broad application: Contingency contracts manipulate both antecedent and consequence conditions, &amp; can include both reinforcement and punishment procedures. (Selfridge, 2004).</li> <li>- Ethical: Contracts also may prove a more ethical classroom management approach than some time-out procedures as teachers do not remove the student from instruction (Selfridge, 2004).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Daily, weekly, monthly, and total goal attainment (Ruth, 1996).</li> <li>-Behavior contracts are short term interventions used for learners while goal setting techniques can maintain a person's behaviors over time (Ruth, 1996).</li> <li>-Research on the use of behavioral contracts has shown to be effective amongst all school ages. (elementary through college). (Ruth, 1996;Selfridge, 2004).</li> <li>-Research on the use of behavioral contracts has shown to be effective within multiple settings (i.e. clinical, home, school).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Any learner that needs to decrease maladaptive behaviors and increase adaptive behaviors.</li> <li>-A behavior contract is an effective teacher friendly, positive behavior intervention that includes access to reinforcement for the learner (Selfridge, 2004).</li> <li>-Teachers can create contracts for one or all students, focus on social or academic behaviors, and implement alongside pre-existing management approaches (Selfridge, 2004).</li> </ul>

### How do I implement Behavior Contracts with Goal Setting? (Ruth, 1996)

- Behavioral Contracts & Goals should always be individualized to the target learner and skills in need of improvement.
  - It should be noted that the methods listed below are from research on elementary school aged children in a self-contained class within a general education setting.
  - Additional procedure implementation details can be found in the article cited at the bottom of this guide.
- ✓ = Goal settings that are incorporated into specific sections of Behavioral Contracts

#### Behavior Contracts (BC) + GS

Goal Setting (GS)	BC-1: Main Goal	BC-2: Target Behavior	BC-3: Recording	BC-4: Feedback
Goals must be... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Specific:</b> criteria that can be measured and monitored.</li> <li>✓ <b>Difficult:</b> challenging but not impossible for the learner to attain.</li> <li>✓ <b>Accepted:</b> goals must be accepted by the learner to ensure commitment.</li> <li>✓ <b>Performance Feedback:</b> learners must be provided ongoing feedback on their progress towards each goal.</li> </ul>	The main goal is the behavioral objective or guiding principal of the contract.  ✓ Accepted	The target behavior operationally defines the specific behavior to modify (e.g., increase or decrease).  ✓ Specific	Recording monitors the student's progress. Recordings may vary in style, frequency, complexity, and duration.  ✓ Specific	Feedback provides specific information regarding past performance and future targets. Feedback should be visual, numeric, and easy to understand (e.g. graphs, charts, point earnings).  ✓ Performance Feedback <hr/> <h4 style="text-align: center;">BC-5: Reward Contingency</h4> Specified criteria for success. Contingencies can be hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly, and are usually ratio based (i.e. three checks ay = 1 sticker, four stickers = 1 weekly coupon and four coupons equal the monthly reward).  ✓ Difficult

#### References

Cantrell, R. P., Cantrell, M. L., Huddlestone, C. M. and Wooldridge, R. L. (1969), CONTINGENCY CONTRACTING WITH SCHOOL PROBLEMS. Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 2: 215-220. doi:10.1901/jaba.1969.2-215

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